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NEVER FORGET: Pfizer RIGGED scientific studies, promoted off-label use of its epilepsy drug Neurontin to hit sales targets

08/01/2023 // Laura Harris // Views



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Pfizer manipulated scientific studies centering on and promoted off-label use of its epilepsy drug Neurontin [to increase its sales](#), according to a 2008 probe by the *New York Times*.

Neurontin, whose generic name is gabapentin, was initially approved in 1993 for treating epilepsy. But over the years, its primary purpose represented only a fraction of its actual usage, as Neurontin had been used for off-label uses most of the time since its approval. The drug's off-label use helped propel its annual sales to nearly \$3 billion before it lost patent protection in 2004.

[The company's rigging of scientific studies](#) included "delaying the publication of studies that had found no evidence the drug worked for some other disorders;" "'spinning' negative data to place it in a more positive light" and "bundling negative findings with positive studies to neutralize the results." Meanwhile, Pfizer issued a statement denying the accusations.

Former employee turned whistleblower David Franklin explained [how Pfizer utilized deceptive marketing practices](#) to push the use of Neurontin. He had been a former employee of Parke-Davis, which was acquired by Warner-Lambert in 1970. Pfizer eventually acquired Warner-Lambert in 2000, also taking Parke-Davis under its wing.

According to Franklin, the New York-based drug manufacturer had engaged in illegal off-label marketing practices to boost sales of Neurontin for other conditions like pain management, bipolar disorder, migraine headaches and drug and alcohol withdrawal.

Pfizer's crimes eventually catch up

The controversial marketing campaign behind Neurontin aimed to convince physicians, who may not have been well-versed in Neurontin's clinical data, that the drug was a viable treatment option for various disorders. As a result, patients were prescribed the medication for off-label uses without sufficient evidence of its efficacy.

Pfizer promoted Neurontin to high-prescribing physicians, cultivated thought leaders by recruiting and training local physicians to serve as speakers in "peer-to-peer selling" programs, and solicited academic leaders with grants and speaking opportunities. These tactics further convince doctors to prescribe Neurontin for unapproved uses, a practice known as "off-label prescribing."

One of the most insidious tactics used in promoting Neurontin was the employment of "seeding trials." These trials, disguised as patient studies, encouraged doctors to use the drug under the guise of participating as investigators in clinical trials. The Neurontin seeding trial involved 772 physicians and 2,759 patients, leading to 11 deaths and 73 serious adverse events. (Related: [Pfizer has a shockingly long history of engaging in illegal activities and human experimentation.](#))

Franklin's concerns were raised when he was informed in April 1996 that the *Food and Drug Administration* strictly prohibited the promotion of any drug for off-label uses. A Parke-Davis executive reportedly dismissed his concerns, telling him to be "out there every day" pushing

Neurontin on physicians. This prompted Franklin to resign and sue his former employer in July 1996.

The whistleblower's choice to do the right thing paid off. The company's illegal marketing practices caught up with it – [leading to a \\$430 million settlement](#), one of the largest False Claims Act recoveries against a pharmaceutical company in U.S. history, in May 2004. Ten years later in June 2014, [Pfizer shelled out another \\$325 million](#) to settle Neurontin-related claims.

For his efforts, Franklin received about \$26.6 million in the May 2004 settlement money. According to *SFGATE*, this was awarded to him "under legal provisions that reward citizens for helping to recover government money obtained by fraud."

Learn more about Pfizer and other Big Pharma companies at BigPharmaNews.com.

Watch *InfoWars* founder Alex Jones expounding on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's admission that [Israelis were used as human guinea pigs](#) for Pfizer's Wuhan coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine.

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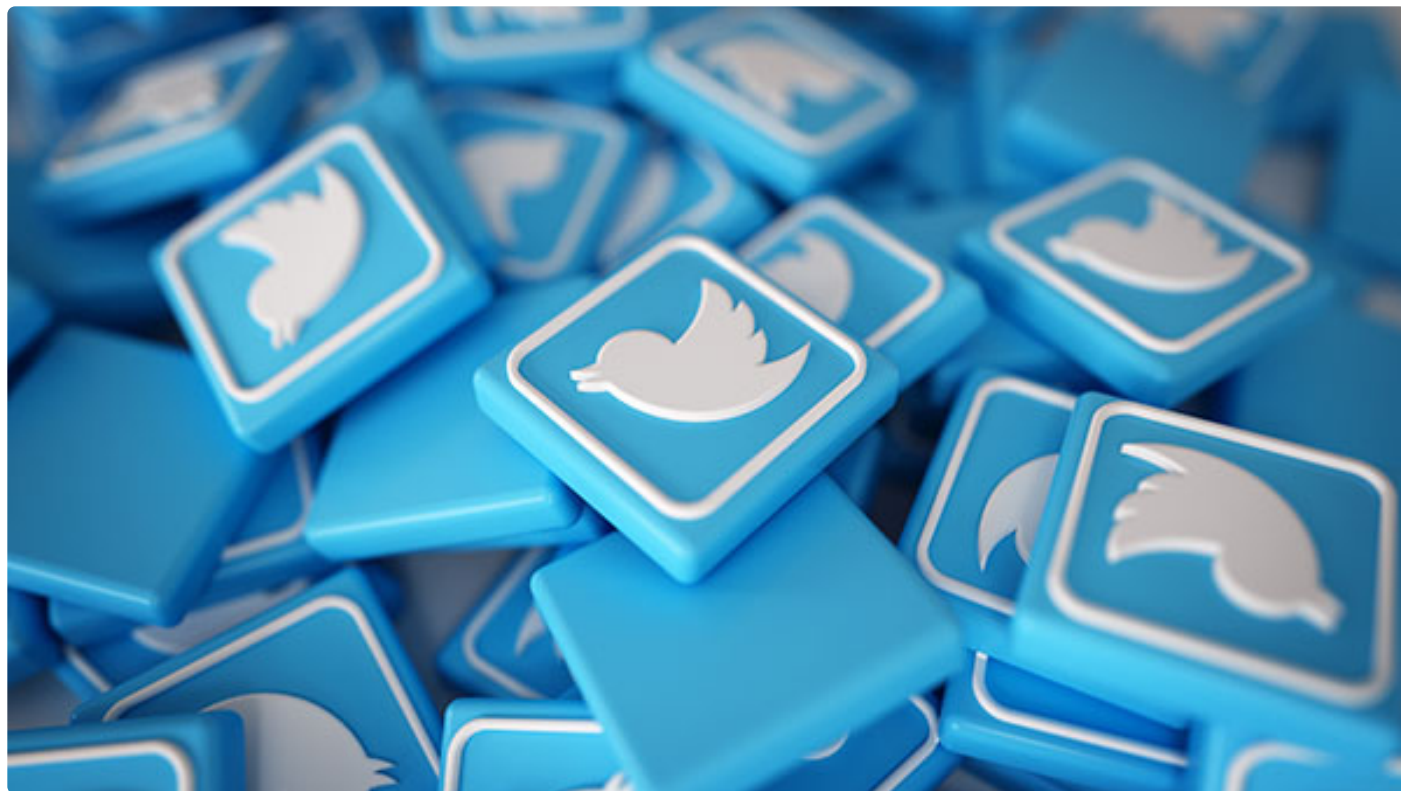
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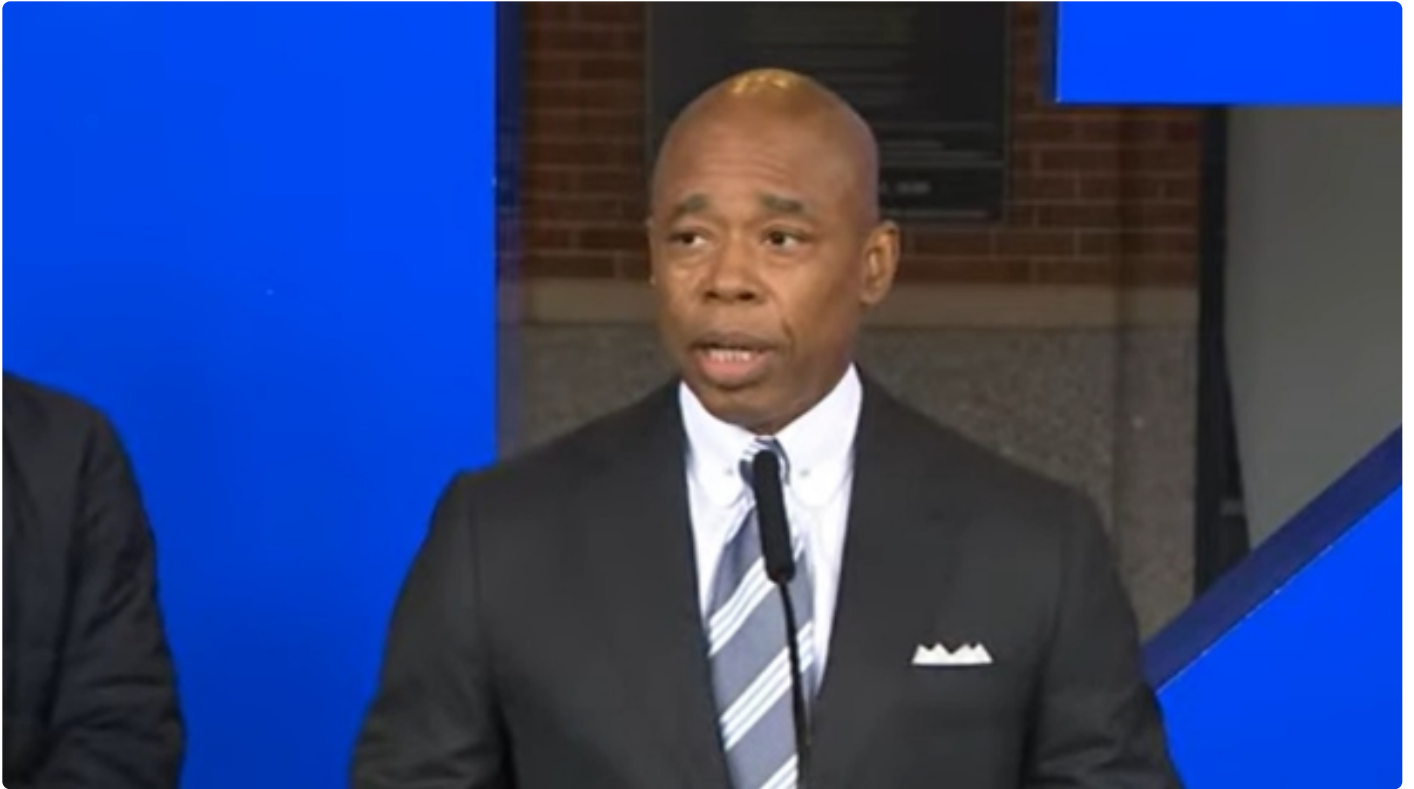
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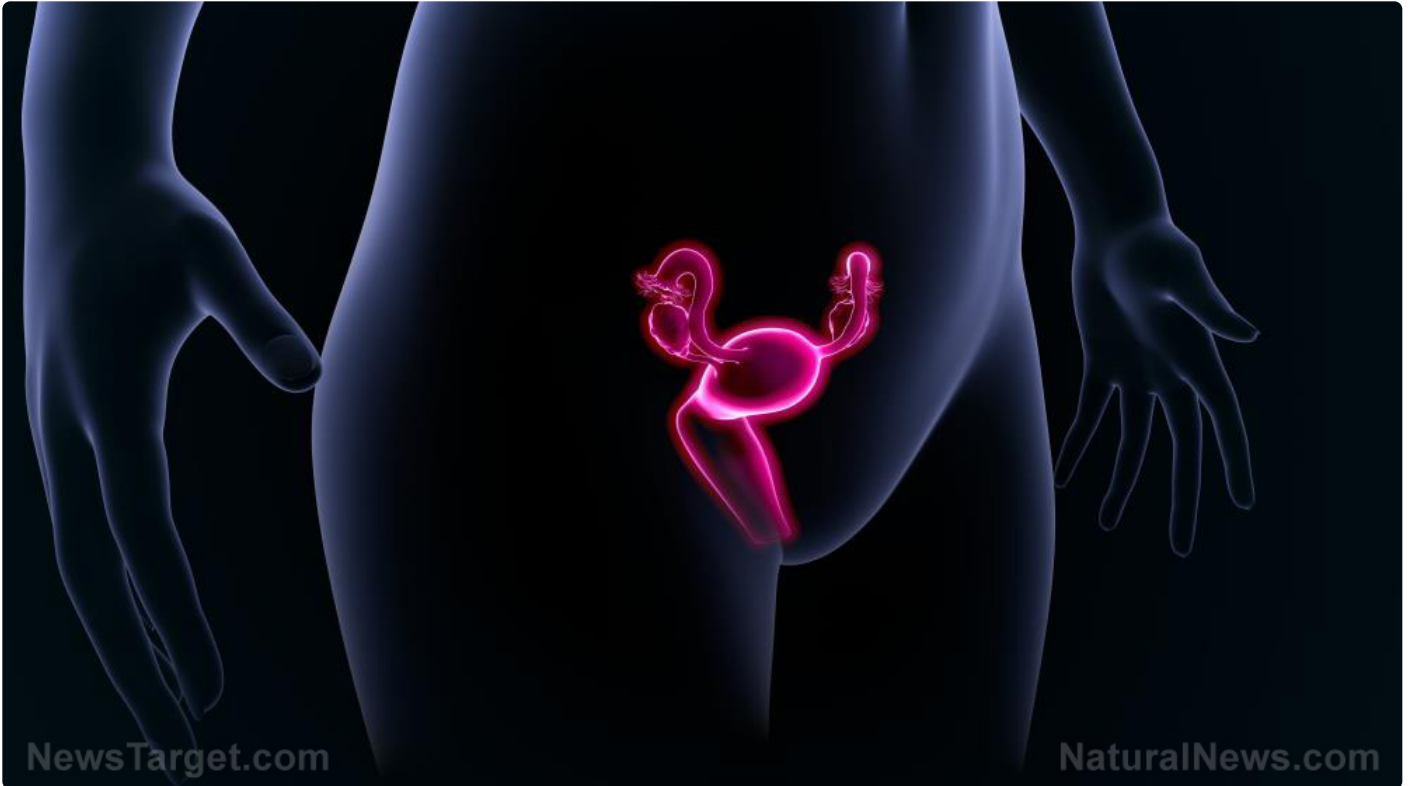
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